

She would have sugar-plums, and sticks of twisted candy; she would have peppermint hearts, and a little new doll—no, she wouldn't buy a doll on second thought, for she had two already. She would keep some of her money to carry to school, or, perhaps, all of it, and show it to her playmates, who seldom had so much.

"Shall I? shall I?" Oh! how that wicked tempter urged the fair-haired little girl! What golden visions he placed in array before her! How he kept whispering, "mama will never know it, never, never, never; for she has forgotten all about it;" and how stealthily, at last, that wicked tempter, that dwelt in Mary's dear little heart, caught her white hand, and slowly carried it till the tips of her fingers touched the very rim of the shining sixpence.

But, thank God, there is also an angel in every human being, as long as he strives to keep pure and good, whose delight it is to overthrow this wicked tempter, that assails not only little Mary, but men and women.

She came slowly up, and murmured, in a quite still voice that would not have frightened a mouse, "Oh! little Mary, little Mary, don't you know that is stealing? don't you know it's as wicked to take that bit of money, as for the great thief to rob your father's money-drawer, or steal your mother's gold ring?"

"But father and mother would find it out then; they would know that somebody had taken their treasures—this little sixpence I'm *sure* nobody remembers, and I want it badly," almost insensibly the fingers had closed over the money.

"But little Mary," said the good angel in a solemn voice that quite awed the child, "there's a great God, whose eye can see away into your heart; and he knows the thoughts you're thinking. He has found out the dark corners where these wicked thoughts hide, not daring to come into the light. Oh! little Mary, remember how often your darling mother has talked to you about that sin; think that though *she* might not know it, God and you would, and all the time you would keep feeling, 'I'm a thief, I'm a thief; I stole sixpence, and I shall never be happy again.' No, little Mary, though you are ever so sorry, you can never be happy again."

"Shall I? shall I?" The wicked tempter had spoken for the last time; little Mary took the sixpence, with a heightened color, and heavily beating heart, but she ran as fast as she could run, never stopping to take breath till she found her mother, and eagerly holding out the money, she cried, "It was on the table in the chamber, dear mother."

Her mother smiled, took the sixpence, and kissing Mary's forehead, she said, "What a dear, little daughter I have got! some little daughters would have kept the money, and never have told of it; how can I be thankful enough to God who has given me such an honest little girl!"

Mary held down her head; the tears were gathering thickly on her eyes, but she looked up bravely, and said, almost sobbing, "oh, mama, I don't know as I am honest; am I honest if I wanted to take it *ever so much*, and almost did take it?"

"Bless you, my child," said the happy mother,

LITTLE MARY'S TEMPTATION.

BY MRS. M. A. DENISON.

"Shall I? shall I?" whispered little Mary to herself, standing on tiptoe with her chubby hands folded behind her.

On the polished table that her blue eyes just peeped over, laid a bright round sixpence, a new sixpence that Mary longed to see transferred to her little, red silk bag. Her mother had left the coin there, and forgotten it; Mary knew, because she heard her say that there was not a bit of small change in the house.

Long and eagerly Mary contemplated the treasure. What a variety of nice things took shape and floated over that table, crowding round the new sixpence, and giving it a sort of fairy value; surely, it would buy such an endless variety of pretty toys, and if she could get two sugar birds for one penny, what a countless lot could she buy with six whole pence.

THE YOUNG LAUNDRESSES.

BY MRS. ALICE B. NEAL.

PART I.

"We should like so much to help ourselves dear aunt, Nora has so much to do."

"And it's such a nice shady place," urged Amanda.

"But what would your mother say, my dears?" returned the quiet Mrs. Spencer. "Besides, you will never accomplish it."

"Let us try, do please," said both the girls, and at last their aunt gave a reluctant consent.

Away they flew to the little room given up to them during their visit to the Parsonage, and the tumbling of drawers and trunks that ensued, would have alarmed their mother; and certainly gave a loud note of preparation.

"Here are two handkerchiefs, one night dress, three pairs of stockings, and two skirts of mine, soiled," said Amanda, triumphantly.

"And I have this great pile of under-clothes, and my blue cambric frock," returned her sister. "It will be nice to have it all fresh for the little party, Laura Elliott is to give. I think Laura is so nice—don't you?"

"And her brother John is a perfect gentleman," added Amanda. "I think this green apron had better go in, dear, and then we shall have about the same. I wonder if Nora will let us iron our things, this afternoon. How surprised mother will be when she hears what we have done."

"What shall you wear to work in?" inquired Ellen, looking down at the neat chintz dress which she wore.

"Oh, we shall take off our dresses, of course; no one will see us there, and I will put on my white saucy, and be careful not to splash it."

"My dears," called Mrs. Spencer, as they passed through the sitting room.

It was certainly provoking to be stopped just at that moment, but they came back with their sun-bonnets in their hands, and the soiled clothes hanging over their arms, like miniature laundresses.

"Now, I wish you to understand," said their aunt, "that I do not approve of this matter at all. But as I see your hearts are bent on it, *I allow it*. You are to have no help from Nora, for she is baking this morning, and I expect some gentlemen to dine with your uncle, so you must be through in good season. Mr. Poland, your favorite, Ellen is among them."

"Yes, ma'am," both of the girls answered, meekly, and hurried away as fast as they could, bent on proving to Mrs. Spencer that they were not helpless, and had no need whatever of Nora's assistance.

This, then, was the grand scheme they had formed, and now proceeded to put in practice. Amanda had quite an idea of doing impossible things. Her nature was quick and sprightly; she was busy from morning till night, but rarely finished half she undertook. She wanted at one time to be a philanthropist. It was when her mother was reading the Life of Mrs. Fry; but she never finished the coarse underclothes her mother was persuaded to take in her name from the Dorcas society. At another time, she undertook to teach Ann, their servant, to read. But Ann proved stupid; and it is to be doubted whether they ever got beyond "Be-ker," in the spelling book.

Her activity had displayed itself several times before, during the vacation they were spending at Brook Parsonage. Once she had offered to put the china closet in complete order; but by the time every thing was out of place, she deserted her part for luncheon, and idled so all the afternoon, that Mrs. Spencer was obliged to leave visitors and finish the work herself. Then her uncle's book-cases met with a similar disarrangement, all through the helpful zeal of his little niece.

Now her genius had developed itself in proposing to her sister, that they should wash their own clothes this week, and save Nora so much trouble on Monday morning. It is true city-bred young ladies of nine and eleven have seldom any great practice in this useful art; but Miss Amanda had the theory from cross-questioning Nora, at the wash tub, and she felt fully competent to instruct her younger sister in the various mysteries of mrahing, rinsing, etc.

The Parsonage was in a very small and se-

clined village, and took its name from the stream that ran at the foot of the garden,—a large brook, or creek, as it was called, a little lower down, where it spread into a broad bay, and emptied finally in the Hudson river.

At Brook Parsonage, however, it was but a narrow, murmuring stream, winding among pleasant trees, and gurgling over large stones that seemed as bridges, by stepping from one to another. The vegetable garden of the Parsonage overhung it; but there was a fence and a high bank to scramble down. A rude shed had been constructed, scarcely larger than a closet, to hold the washing utensils used by Nora, who made a fire-place for the occasion, of some stones piled together, and swung her kettle on a crooked tree that made the most charming gipsy arrangement you can conceive of.

It was this that had revivified Miss Amanda's fancy. I don't believe she would have given one thought to such a disagreeable task, had it been conducted under the kitchen rafters. But to make a gipsy fire, and sit under the tree while the clothes were simmering in the kettle, and to ring them in the running brook! And then they should relieve Nora of so much trouble, and that would be right, because their mother had said the only reason she hesitated to accept their aunt's invitation, was lest they should give her too much to do in looking after them while she was so delicate.

"And now," said Laura, as they surveyed their ground, "we must have the tubs and the kettle, and make our fire. Here are some pieces of wood that were left last Monday; but what shall we do for some coals? Nora won't give us any, that's certain. She'd say we would set the house on fire, and run to Aunt Spencer with one of her stories. Oh! I see, there's Sarah Brown at the door, and you go over the brook and ask for the coals, and I will get the things out while you are gone."

"But," remonstrated Ellen, "the brook is so high! I shouldn't dare to cross it without anything in my hands, and red-hot coals, Amanda. What if I should spill them?"

"Why they couldn't set fire to anything if they fell in the brook, could they? Come now, don't be unkind, and we havn't any time to lose; it's ten o'clock now."

So Ellen, persuaded, but not convinced of the feasibility of the project, departed for Sarah Brown's in fear and trembling, while her sister proceeded to inspect Nora's treasures of tubs and buckets.

PART II.

As Ellen had on a pair of new bronze boots, she thought it advisable to take off her shoes and stockings and wade over the brook, though she did not decide on this until she had once or twice dipped her foot in the stream. She reached the other side without any accident, and found Sarah Brown, a rough, coarse girl of thirteen, "sweeping down" the kitchen, preparatory to getting dinner over. She was the cook, chambermaid and waiter of her father's household, and already quite a woman in size and strength.

The Little Spencers had a brook-side acquaint-

ance with her, which their aunt did not exactly approve. However, it was an emergency, and Ellen walked boldly into the kitchen.

"La, buy," said Miss Sarah, leaning on her hemlock broom, and surveying her young visitor from head to foot, "you don't say you waded through the brook, now. How's Miss Spencer this morning. Guess your goin' to have company, ain't you? I see Nory a mixin' some cup-cake when I went round to dinner some turn pikes. Set down, won't ye?"

"Thank you," answered Ellen, in a voice making a strong contrast to Miss Brown's nasal tones. But she declined the chair, and stated the object of her visit as briefly as possible. Her young hostess was evidently envious at the proceedings across the brook, and asked Ellen "where they'd learnt the business!" As for the coals, she could have a basket full, but what had she brought to take them in? There was but one shovel in the house, and as Sarah was baking, too, it was wanted immediately to clear the oven. At length, the expedient of a broad chip of green wood suggested itself, and away she hurried to the wood-block to select one. The bark side downwards, it was speedily hopped with live coals, and Ellen, shuddering inwardly with fear, grasped it with all apparent courage.

"Are you *sure* it won't get on fire?" she asked of Sarah, who said, "No, indeed, not afore it got dry," and escorted her city-bred visitor to the margin of the brook.

It was unusually swollen, this Friday morning, and the stepping-stones were quite wet with the tiny cascades that broke over them. Ellen took two or three steps quite boldly, but she could not keep her eyes on the stones and the coals at the same time: and just in the middle of the stream, she saw the wood already smoking. The great heat scorched her unprotected hand—the brook gurgled and foamed at her feet—her head grew dizzy, and the stones she had just stepped on rolled slightly in its sandy bed. She tried to preserve her balance and succeeded; but down came the coals into the water, one resting for a moment on her bare foot, causing her to scream with pain and terror. Then, after all this, her foot still smarting, her head yet dizzy—to find Amanda coolly preparing to light the fire with some matches she had discovered with the kettle—it was certainly *too* hard; the more so, that her sister could not be made to see how she had suffered from nervous fear, beside the actual hurt.

Ellen's enthusiasm had received an effectual damper, but Amanda was as daring as ever. She toiled and toiled at the fire, that would blow out with every fresh puff of wind; and, finally, when a struggling, smoky flame appeared, summoned Ellen to assist her in handing out the tubs and buckets. The kettle was hardest to manage, but it was finally drawn down to the brook and filled—but, alas! then, they were unable to move it a single inch! So the water was all thrown out, and the kettle, after much tugging and straining, hung on the crooked branch, to be filled more slowly with the huge tin dipper. The tubs were distributed—a large and small one to each, for they had concluded they should "splash"

each other if they worked in the same. By this time, their faces were red and heated, their white skirts bore many a long, dingy stain, and their cross barred muslin sashes were certainly not in order to wear to church on Sunday.

It was rather tiresome, sitting in the hot sun and waiting for the water to get warm enough to commence operations. Ellen's foot was now quite lame, and was marked by a deep red stripe where the coal had fallen. She began to think her sister unkind because she took no notice of it, and was not inclined to fall into raptures about how aunt would be surprised and convinced when they showed her the clothes nicely ironed, that night, and what their mother would say to their being so industrious. Amanda's position was anything but lady-like, as she sat embracing her knees with both arms. You would have thought she had assumed Nora's manners with Nora's work.

By and bye she grew very impatient; and though the fire burned so slowly that the water was scarcely lukewarm, she dipped out enough to commence with, and putting a large handful of soap on her green apron, she began to rub it vigorously, talking the while to Ellen, who pre-
dicted more cautiously,

"Seems to me, Elly, they put clothes in soak. Yes, I'm sure they do. So I'll put everything in at once. There! I've given them a good stir. I wish I had a rubbing-board. Nora always carries hers up to the house. I never shall get along without a rubbing-board, shall you, Ellen? Oh, dear! how hot the sun is! I wish I could move this great heavy bench into the shade. I believe my neck is all blistered. Why don't you rub, Ellen? this is the way;" and so she rattled on to Ellen's mute nods, or weary, disinterested words.

At length, Sarah Brown was hailed once more, and a "wash-board" borrowed from her. Their young neighbor was particularly delighted at their proceedings, and volunteered the information that "it might be a new fashion, but she never saw bluing put into suds before, and 'wasn't best to put soft soap into calicos."

Amanda was not a little mortified about the bluing, for she had informed her sister that "Indigo was quite necessary to clear the suds." She had watched Nora, on Monday, and she dipped the bag in the water and then squeezed it, so."

The rubbing-board proved fatal to the knuckles of the young amateurs. What with the strong soft soap, and the unaccustomed immersion in water for so long a time, small blisters rapidly formed, and the skin was bruised and discolored. So after stirring the clothes about for a little while longer, the sisters concluded they were clean enough to boil, and accordingly another liberal supply of soap was given to the different articles, and they were placed in the kettle. To be sure, they did not promise snowy whiteness, and Ellen was somewhat dismayed at the appearance of her blue cambric frock, but Amanda said the boiling and rinsing would do wonders. However, even her buoyant spirits flagged as they once more seated themselves to await the boiling that would not commence, and

their aching limbs, as well as aching heads, thrilled with pain.

The kettle would not boil. There was an end of it. The sticks of wood were too large, the chips too green. The flame plunged dimly through huge volumes of smoke, and the suds did not even simmer. How long they would have waited for it, I cannot tell—but just then the dinner-bell of the Parsonage rang loudly, and they started to their feet in dismay. There was not a moment to lose, for their hair was all in disorder, their faces blackened, and with the indigo, blue-blackened, and the perspiration had made a strange mingling of hues. And now was a hard task to empty the tubs, moving them from the high wash-bench, and carrying them to the brook-side, for there was not time for bailing them out with the dipper. The clothes were *squeezed*, not wrung, out of the warm suds in which they had been soaking, and fresh water poured upon them, but they were more dingy than ever. But the wringing out was a task they had not calculated for. They succeeded very well in the lighter pieces, but the night-dresses and skirts baffled their puny strength. They could scarcely lift the heavy cloth, saturated with water. Their arms were already stiff, their hands aching. It seemed as if Ellen's head would burst with pain. She longed to sit down on the flat stone, and cry, but she was afraid Amanda would laugh at her, perhaps scold her; so she toiled on. She saw Sarah Brown come down to the brook-side and watch them. She wished she would not look at her so strangely—and then her temples throbbed more painfully, and the brook roared louder and louder, the sky grew dark, and everything reeled before her.

Poor Ellen! when consciousness returned, she was lying on the chintz lounge in her aunt's parlor, all soiled and wet as she was, her face showing the stains all the more for her great paleness, and a strange ringing in her ears, as if the brook was flowing through them.

Her aunt was holding her, and several gentlemen, evidently just from the dinner-table, were standing around. Poor Amanda! for she was there, too, almost as pale as her sister with fright, and looking still more dirty and forlorn, with her hair hanging about her eyes, her skirt pinned back as she had seen Nora do, and the tears making blue channels down her cheeks. They were both put to bed as soon as possible, and Nora sent to finish their work, which the good-natured Sarah Brown had already accomplished.

It was not until the next day that Ellen fully understood how she had fainted through heat, and pain and fatigue, and Sarah Brown ran for assistance; and her favorite Mr. Poland, whose visit they had lost after such pleasant anticipations, had carried her to the house in his arms.

And it was a sad sequel, when the new green apron, and pretty cambric frock, were found soaked almost white in the strong soap-suds, completely ruined. However, their mother told Mrs. Spencer, afterwards, that it was a cheap lesson to Amanda, who began to be contented to do work suited to her, and not to attempt a fresh, impossible scheme every day in the week.